

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated February 13, 2007. In view of the foregoing amendments and following representations, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

By the above amendment, claims 17 and 18 are newly presented. Note that each of the new claims read on the elected invention. Thus, claims 2, 4-6 and 15-18 are currently pending in the present application. Claims 7-11 have been cancelled, and claims 1, 3, 12, 13 and 14 have been withdrawn from consideration.

On page 2-6 of the Office Action, claims 2, 5, 6 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tetsuo et al. (JP 09-060682) in view of Downey et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,217,115). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The present invention features two types of joints which are used in combination to connect two members. With this arrangement, the present invention brings about effects that cannot be achieved by use of either of the joints alone, namely, both high peeling resistance and high shear strength (see paragraph [0010] of the present specification).

However, neither Tetsuo nor Downey disclose or suggests a combination of two types of such joints.

Further, the link assembly disclosed by Downey has a first link and a second link that are rotatably mounted together (see col. 1, lines 36-63). Further, col. 2, line 64 to col. 3, line 2 of Downey states:

"[A]s shown in FIGS. 3A-C, the linkage assemblies 32 each include a first link 36 with a first mounting portion and a second link 38 with a second mounting portion.

The first mounting portion is deformed into engagement with the second mounting portion to rotatably connect the first link 36 to the second link 38."

Downey in col. 4, lines 27-30 further explains that:

"The links 36, 38 shown in FIGS. 5A-C are to be pressed together so that the links 36, 38 cannot become separated from one another, but the links 36, 38 must be able to rotate freely with respect to each other."

In view of the above, it appears that if another joint were to be combined with the Downey link assembly, the first and second links will not be rotatable relative to each other. Therefore, it is submitted that there can be no reason to combine another joint with the link assembly. In making such a combination, the Downey linkage assembly would not operate as intended. Thus, it is submitted that it would not have been obvious to combine the Tetsuo tube assembly with the Downey linkage assembly.

Further, on pages 7-8 of the Office Action, claims 2, 4, and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tetsuo et al. (JP 09-060682) in view of Stevenson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,814,531). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Initially, it is noted that the Stevenson reference does not disclose or suggest a combination of two types of joints.

The invention disclosed in the Stevenson reference addresses a particular problem in the prior art, i.e., rotation of metal sheets relative to each other (see col. 1, lines 35-48). For this purpose, an asymmetric rivet is used to prevent relative sheet rotation (see col. 1, lines 52-59). Accordingly, this means that two metal sheets are connected by one joint. Therefore, as described above in connection with the proposed Tetsuo/Downey combination, it is not possible to add another joint to this assembly.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the applied prior art references neither

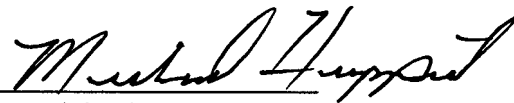
disclose nor suggest the claimed combination of two types of joints. Therefore, it is apparent that the use of two types of such joints would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, even when taking available common technical knowledge into account.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the present application is now clearly in condition for allowance. The Examiner therefore is requested to pass this case to issue.

In the event that the Examiner has any comments or suggestions of a nature necessary to place this case in condition for allowance, then the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney by telephone to promptly resolve any remaining matters.

Respectfully submitted,

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August 13, 2007